

taken care of, the support slice must be increased to support the alternate scouts.

Whenever the scout platoon is relieved of a mission, one of its noncommissioned officers should be designated to support the alternate platoon. This NCO should be someone other than the platoon sergeant and should rotate each time the scouts are relieved. He should use a scout vehicle to run the support. The scout platoon would already be at the unit maintenance collection point (UMCP) and would be able to get by working through the UMCP.

All classes of support for both platoons would come through the scout platoon first, then to the alternate platoon. The scouts could switch off vehicles between support missions, if all of their vehicles are in need of maintenance. One of the advantages, aside from taking care of the problem of support, would be to give the two platoons a link; the NCO running support could help keep the scout platoon leader in touch with what was going on with the alternate scouts.

Using the antiarmor company as the alternate scout platoon worked well at the NTC for various reasons, but the antiarmor company is now being phased out of the tables of organization and equipment for mechanized battalions. This leaves a Bradley platoon as the only real choice.

There are many things about a Bradley platoon to consider when

deploying it as the alternate scout platoon:

The Bradley platoon has four vehicles (BFVs) while the scouts have six (HMMWVs). Although BFVs offer more protection and firepower than the HMMWVs, being larger and louder, they are also much more likely to be detected by the enemy.

With four vehicles instead of six, the Bradley platoon cannot observe as large an area from its vehicles, but it has great

A scout platoon can become incapable of accomplishing its mission in a short time because vehicles have been lost (either from mechanical failure or from destruction on the battlefield).

dismounted capability. If augmented with extra radios, the Bradley platoon can operate in four dismounted teams of four or five men each to conduct a thorough dismounted reconnaissance.

The BFV's integrated sight unit and TOW system give the platoon an advantage over the HMMWV during screening and counterreconnaissance missions. A BFV can quickly acquire and engage targets at long range.

In designating an alternate scout platoon, a battalion commander should decide first which platoon to choose

and then which lieutenant should lead it. This will allow him to choose from a company that can afford to give up a platoon during tactical operations; an example is a company that is normally left in reserve. Ideally, the leader he chooses will also be one he plans to make the next scout platoon leader. This lieutenant should then be sent to the scout platoon leader school before he leads the alternate scout platoon. Each subsequent leader of the platoon should also come from a rifle platoon leader job and be on his way to becoming the scout platoon leader.

In summary, the alternate scout platoon should be treated as an important element in the battalion task force. It should be led by a competent and experienced platoon leader who is trained to conduct scout missions; it should be permanently designated; and it should be kept abreast of the situation during tactical operations so it is ready to assume the job of scout platoon at any time.

Most important, the task force commander should understand the importance of the alternate scout platoon and make plans for its use.

Lieutenant William M. Connor, V served as an antiarmor platoon leader, a rifle platoon leader, rifle company executive officer, and headquarters company executive officer and recently completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course. He is a 1990 graduate of The Citadel.

Using Attack Helicopters

LIEUTENANT SHAUN GREENE

Although the primary mission of an attack helicopter is to destroy armored and mechanized threat targets, this mission changes when the helicopter is employed in a low-intensity conflict

(LIC). In this environment, it may assume a role similar to close air support (CAS) for the units on the ground. With this new role, it is important for infantry units to effectively communicate

with and direct the attack aircraft.

Small infantry units can already call in fire from attack helicopters; this was very common in many combat actions in Vietnam. But the art of providing at-

tack helicopter fire support to light infantry has been lost, for the most part, from disuse. The reason is that although attack helicopters can be used throughout the spectrum of conflict from low to high intensity, the focus has been on mid to high intensity where they can mass fires against armor and mechanized forces.

Some Army field manuals touch on the possibility of using attack helicopters for close support, but none of them provides instruction on how to do this. It will be interesting to see how the lessons of the Somali peacekeeping mission will influence the use of attack helicopters in future support to light infantry. Unfortunately, those lessons may also soon be forgotten if they are not studied and seriously considered.

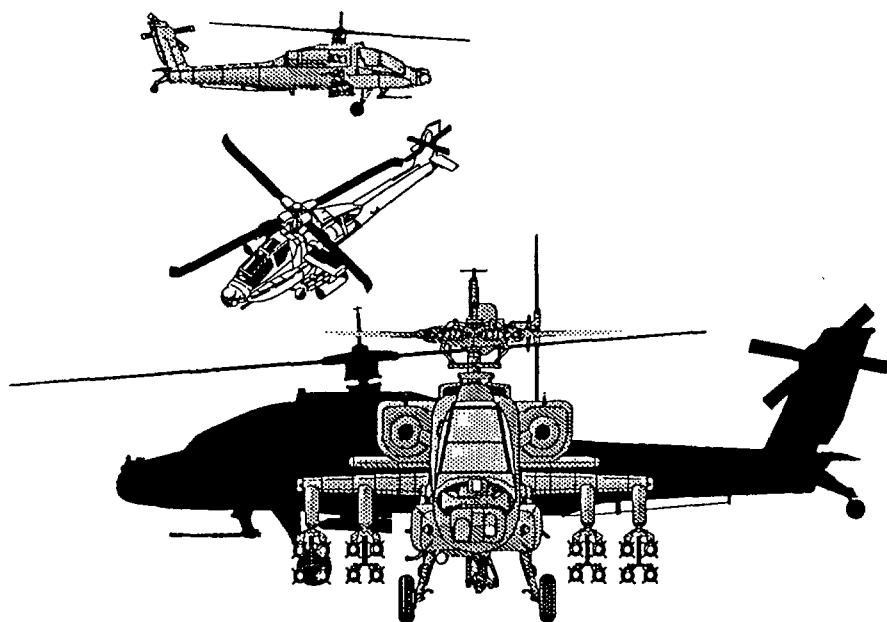
Recently, the 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation, 25th Infantry Division, has made great strides in re-examining this art and maintaining it. Two of the battalion's primary missions in a LIC environment are to provide security for air assaults and to provide fire support for the infantry. Although artillery usually provides the light infantry with fire support, artillery is not always able to help. If a unit is out of artillery range or in the confines of built-up areas, fire support from attack helicopters is crucial.

On a recent gunnery exercise, the battalion used infantrymen to call in and adjust fire on enemy positions. Both the aviators and the infantrymen learned a lot of good lessons.

Directing attack helicopters seems simple on the surface, as Clausewitz said, "the simplest thing [in war] is difficult," and light infantry must have an easy-to-remember method of calling and controlling helicopter fire. Unlike the Air Force, with a nine-line CAS request format, there is no formal or set way to do this doctrinally. To be successful, however, the following are basic tasks that must be completed:

- Gaining communication between air and ground.
- Identifying the enemy position.
- Identifying the friendly position.
- Adjusting fire.

There are many ways the attack helicopter can be tasked to support an



infantry unit, whether it is requested on the spot, through battalion and brigade, or assigned a direct support role during a mission. No matter how the tasking comes down, communication between the helicopter and the ground unit is paramount. The division communications SOP must be followed precisely. If all units are supposed to be able to change frequencies rapidly in the secure mode, then all units need to do this in accordance with the signal operating instructions to maintain the interface between the air and ground elements.

The attack helicopters in the 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation, fill their SINCGARS (single-channel ground and airborne radio subsystem) with the infantry brigade operating frequencies so that if they get a call to support, all they need is the frequency and call sign of the unit needing assistance. The attack helicopter can then talk directly to the unit and provide that fire support.

Once communication has been established, the next two tasks for the infantryman are identifying the enemy and friendly positions. Although the order for accomplishing these tasks is not set, pilots generally like a quick warning order on the enemy first so they will know what they're dealing with.

There are many ways to identify the enemy, and these methods change for the aviators with conditions of visibili-

ty. During the day, possible methods are a grid coordinate, terrain association, distance and direction from the friendly position if the aviator already knows it, or marking the enemy position with friendly tracer fire. During hours of limited visibility, the day methods can also work, but with night vision goggles (NVGs) and lasers, additional techniques can be used.

The Army has made great strides in the area of night operations, and a big part of this has been the wide use of NVGs and lasers. These pieces of technology make locating an enemy position at night easy for both the aviator and the infantryman. Simply, the laser is used to designate the target, and the NVGs are used to see the designation. Either the aviator or the infantryman can designate. The new AIM-1 laser, now in the inventory for attack helicopters, gives the attack helicopter a first-round hit night fire capability for the M197 20mm gun. All the infantryman has to do is look at the laser through NVGs and tell the aviator whether or not the laser is on the target.

If the roles are reversed, infantry units can use the new AN/PAQ-4 laser for small arms to "paint" a line between the friendly enemy positions. A soldier "paints" the line by moving the beam back and forth from the friendly position to the enemy position along the

ground. So long as the unit is not in a thickly vegetated area, aviators can effectively find the enemy location. The AN/PAQ-4 is able to paint the line because it is not powerful or precise enough to lase right on the target, as the AIM-1 can do. (A hand-held version of the AIM-1 is available in the supply system; units can purchase it for about \$900 and be able to lase right on the target.)

Identifying friendly positions is important in preventing fratricide. Some techniques for locating by day are grid coordinate, terrain association, or VX-17 panel or smoke. Some techniques for night are grid coordinate, terrain association, and infrared or colored chemlights (other than green or blue, since aviators have difficulty seeing these colors with their NVGs). The pilot must give a positive identification of the friendly position before firing. Many of the problems of fratricide dur-

ing Operation DESERT STORM were a result of failure to positively identify friendly forces.

Once the target is engaged, fire adjustments will help ensure that the rounds are hitting the enemy position. If there is a misunderstanding of the target, a simple adjustment can remedy the situation. Adjustments with attack helicopters are best done using cardinal directions; for instance, if the rounds are striking 100 meters north of the enemy, the correction should be "shift south 100 meters."

The use of attack helicopters is really quite simple for infantrymen, so long as they remember these four tasks. These tasks are deliberately general so that calling for fire is simple yet flexible.

Finally, it is important that infantry units train regularly with aviation units. Infantry units tend to focus inward on making themselves better in their basic infantry tasks, which is good. But in-

fantry units can also make themselves better by incorporating the tremendous firepower assets of attack aviation into their training. Infantry units also must shift their focus from assault aviation to attack aviation.

For light infantry units with limited organic firepower, attack aviation units can be an important force multiplier. In the post-Cold War world, low intensity conflicts are commonplace, and the Army must be prepared to face the challenge they present. One of the best ways to face these challenges is solid coordination between the light infantry and attack aviation.

Lieutenant Shaun Greene is S-3 Air in the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. He previously participated in a cross-training exchange program with the 1st Battalion, 25th Aviation. He is a 1991 graduate of the United States Military Academy.

Enhanced Home-Station Gunnery

MAJOR GARY W. ACE
SERGEANT FIRST CLASS WILLIAM D. LaCOMBE

Using the Bradley fighting vehicle's (BFV's) integrated sight unit in the thermal mode, a commander and gunner can detect and engage targets during any condition of visibility. To make the most of this advantage, however, thermal target engagements must be emphasized during training.

Home-station gunnery (HSG) for units equipped with the BFV is a conti-

nuing, progressive training program that intensifies two or three months before a major gunnery exercise. HSG focuses on orienting the crewmen to the technical aspects of the vehicle's turret system, exposing them to the most fundamental gunnery techniques, building them into an efficient team before the introduction of full-caliber ammunition, and integrating the platoon into

dry-fire proficiency courses. Training BFV gunners to engage targets in the thermal mode at home station uses training time more efficiently and produces better training.

We propose a low-cost, high-payoff gunnery technique that helps gunners build confidence in using the thermal sight. In this technique, no-power thermal tape is applied to scaled targets to